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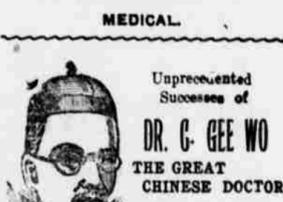
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HIS COURSE IN LOVE.

By LULU JOHNSON. Copyright, 1917, by M. M. Cunningham.

On the whole, Treadway thought it rather nice of him to be willing to marry Marion Hitesman. He was possessed of an income of half a million a year, the income from his mother's estate, and when his father died—well, it required the services of two men to keep track of the Treadway investments. Marion was a dainty little country woman, but she would need a lot of social training, of course. Perhaps a year in a finishing school might be a good thing to fit her for the place in society she was destined to fill. It might be a bother to wait a year before marriage, though, so on second thoughts perhaps a social secretary would be a better plan. Treadway decided upon the social secretary as the lesser of two necessary evils.

Marion Hitesman was only a little country girl, the belle of Wichfield, a village of a few thousand persons. Treadway had been forced to stop over there for repairs to his automobile, and before these were made he had seen Marion. After that the automobile was called upon only for little trips to nearby points of interest, and Treadway paid his easy going court to the girl.

Perkins, his father's lawyer, made his summer home in Wichfield, and the introduction was easily accomplished, but Treadway found courtship according to Wichfield notions rather complicated. In town he would have left a standing order with the florist and confectioner. There would have been an occasional motor excursion and finally a proposal of marriage in the conservatory at some one's dance and a note in the society columns of the papers.

Here it was all different, and, while he enjoyed the novelty of it, he found it rather awkward at times. In town mammas with marriageable daughters were willing to do more than half the courtship for him. Here he found him-



TREADWAY WATCHED HER WISTFULLY. self on the same level of equality in the Hitesman home as Ben Taylor, who clerked in Luscomb's grocery.

Even this fact did not serve to warn him, however, and his declaration was entirely characteristic. The two were returning from a ride in the country. A score of couples had gone out to the home of a farmer host, and the road was dotted with buggies. At Marion's command Treadway had not thrown on speed to outstrip the others, as he usually did, and the car rolled along as quietly as though it were under the observation of a string of traffic police.

Marion, leaning back against the upholstered cushions, gave a luxurious little sigh. "I love automobiling," she said, "when the car does not run too fast."

"You shall have an automobile for your own," he promised, "when we are married."

"Are we to be married?" she asked, with a touch of coldness in her voice. "I hope so," was the prompt reply. "I've got a lot of money, and in time I shall have a lot more. I can give you everything you want and introduce you into society. Of course you'll have to coach up a little, but you'll make it all right. Is it a go?"

"No, thank you," said Marion very quietly. "I admit that the proposition you make is glittering in the extreme, but I must decline."

"Decline?" he gasped in amazement. "Why, I know a hundred girls in New York who would just jump at the chance!"

"In that case," was the quiet retort. "I shall omit the customary expressions of regret. No doubt you will find quick consolation."

Treadway was too stunned to argue. He busied himself with the steering wheel until the big black car drew up in front of the Hitesman home. He helped her out and opened the gate for her. "It is goodby as well as good night," he said as she held out her hand. "I shall be gone in the morning." She stammered something he could

not catch and hurried up the walk to the house. Treadway watched her wistfully until the door closed behind her; then he went away, carrying in his heart the memory of a slender figure silhouetted against the light from the open door.

In the early dawn the big touring car slipped down the dusty road. There was the usual gossip, and then Wichfield forgot Treadway in the excitement of a revival meeting at which a famous evangelist exhorted. But Treadway did not forget, even though he put the width of the Atlantic between himself and the little town where he had met defeat. He dawdled in London and loafed miserably in Paris, but he could not forget the girl with the big brown eyes, and he was glad when at last he turned his steps homeward.

The summer had passed, but the brisk autumnal air made touring a delight, and presently for a second time the big black car rolled into Wichfield. Perkins, the Treadway lawyer, had closed his house and gone back to town, but there was an excellent hotel, and presently Treadway found himself installed in a comfortable room. Once settled he sallied forth to find Marion.

She was not at home, they told him at the house, but Mrs. Hitesman added minute directions by which he found the patch of woods where Marion had gone in search of nuts.

Evidently her nutting was but an excuse for a walk in the woods, for he came upon her day dreaming at the foot of a huge chestnut. As he approached she looked up wonderingly; then, after a moment's pause, she sprang to her feet with outstretched hands.

"For a moment I thought you must be a vision," she cried as he hurried toward her. "Mr. Perkins told me just before he left that you had gone abroad for the winter."

"I did go across," he confirmed, "but I couldn't stay. I wanted to come back and ask you if your decision was final."

"My decision?" she echoed. "Yes," he explained. "I know you told me that you would not marry me, but I could not be content until I asked again. I went to London and Paris to try to forget you, but the farther from home I got the more I seemed to want you, and so here I am."

"But the hundred or more who were ready to accept you and your millions?" she reminded.

"There might be a million or more who would be ready to accept my hundreds," he replied impatiently, "but the whole million in one big seraglio would not be you, dear. It was a silly, bragging speech that I am heartily ashamed of now. It was that which brought me back. I wanted to tell you how well I realized what a fool I had been. I love you too much to give up without another appeal. I've a whole lot to learn, Marion, but will you be the teacher, dear, and show me that the cursed money is not everything?"

"I think I should like to try," she whispered as he caught her hand. "And I came over here prepared for the argument of my life," he said wonderingly.

"You said this time what you should have said before," she replied. "The last time you offered me wealth and position. This time you have offered me your love. It is love that a girl wants, Tom. It's not always the money she seeks. I liked you before, but I could not be bought."

"But I loved you then," he cried. "Not in the same way," she explained, "or you would have told me so. You wanted me to teach you. That was the first lesson."

"Then here endeth the first lesson," cried Treadway, with a laugh, as he bent to touch the soft brown hair with his lips. "Let's hope the others will not be so drastic. You've been pretty hard on your pupil, sweetheart."

Tricking a Jeweler. A fashionably dressed woman once alighted from a brougham in west London and stepped into a hairdresser's shop. She informed the barber that she had a son who was of unsound mind and that the doctor had ordered his head to be shaved.

Her son, she said, was violent, and she instructed the barber to get a couple of assistants and seize him when he was brought round, to tie him in a chair and shave his head in spite of anything he might say. The barber did not relish the job, but an advance fee of a guinea tempted him, and he fell.

Then the lady drove to the jeweler's, bought some expensive rings and jewelry and expressed surprise at having left her purse at home. She offered to drive the jeweler home with her, together with the jewels, and pay him at her residence.

On arriving once more at the barber's the two alighted, and the unfortunate jeweler at a sign from the lady was seized and bound to a chair, and in spite of his angry yells and expostulations his head was shaved. Meanwhile the lady strove off with £200 worth of gems and was never heard of again.—London Mail.

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